

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, September 8, 2008 in the City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, James Benanto, Nick Serednitsky, Beverly Moran and Andrew Cota. David Mikos and Red Lynch were excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti was excused.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted, as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Nick Serednitsky and second by Beverly Moran. Move to accept the minutes of August 11, 2008, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Philip Schinis of Ansonia stated that he is exploring planting trees along the Riverwalk as his Eagle Scout project. He had noticed that there is no shade along the way and thought it would enhance the experience on the walkway.

Chairman Walsh noted that nothing can be planted on the dikes as the Army Corp of Engineers oversees their maintenance and any digging could potentially disturb the integrity of the structure. He directed Mr. Schinis to the Board of Alderman who oversees the Riverwalk.

CORRESPONDENCES: Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell noted the fall programs are underway. Pop Warner has already played two of their four home games. Public Works has suggested that an employee be scheduled in conjunction with the home games but Pop Warner indicates that they will oversee the grounds and collection any litter, to the best of their ability. There was a problem with the lights at their first game and this has been repaired.

Youth Soccer is using Bradley School for their fall program. Mr. O'Connell had spoken with them about balancing the use of both Witek Park and Bradley and they indicated that they would schedule everything at Bradley.

Mr. O'Connell and the Police Department are being watchful of unauthorized use of Witek Park. There have been a few episodes where there were teams playing that did not have authorization and they were asked to leave. Witek Park is open Monday through Friday for High School soccer with a few scheduled games on the weekend. Men's leagues play on Sundays.

Members discussed the possible future demand for soccer by the Men's Leagues. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the Commission will have to draft rules and guidelines for the leagues (with resident

participation requirements) if this demand is realized. Currently, there are two teams authorized to play in Derby.

It was noted that at Ryan Field, players are setting up and playing volleyball regularly. This is not an organized sport at this time but clearly there is an interest. Chairman Walsh noted that a volleyball court was included in the original long-term plans for Witek Park. At the time people did not feel there was a need. He stressed that the Parks and Recreation Commission purpose is to provide recreation to all ages and informal use of a facility should be accommodated but due to the limited number of facilities and the overuse of those facilities, it makes it difficult to provide open use.

It was discussed that the New Middle School Committee has suggested the possibility of building a playing field within the scope of the project. Chairman Walsh suggested that they be approached to explain the current field layout and the possible scenarios that would offer the best use of the facility. Chairman Walsh will contact the chair of the Committee.

Mr. O'Connell stated the Derby Veteran's Community Center shut down was done the week before Labor Day and the code compliance work on the pool and the Jacuzzi was completed. The cost was approximately \$2,000. Now they are looking at the air handler for the health club as it is failing. He is exploring the cost of replacing or repairing, the existing unit is over twelve years old and the repair costs seem to be running at more than fifty percent of the cost of replacing the unit. Members noted that the new unit would be more efficient and would result in energy savings in the long run. Mr. O'Connell will speak with Board of Alderman President Ken Hughes about this matter.

The field house was recently painted utilizing city employees using the Public Works sprayer so the expense was only the cost of paint.

A high school basketball program was started at the Derby Veteran's Community Center with minimal interest at this time. The plan is to continue the program to see if interest increases.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti was excused.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Walsh stated that the two Rotary Clubs have funded the purchase of stencils for the Trolley Belt Line walking path and they will be coordinating the painting. The project should be completed shortly at no cost to the City.

A cleanup project is moving forward to clean up the banks of the Naugatuck River on the Derby Avenue side of the river. UI has given approval to enter the properties along their pathway which will along equipment to access the area and they will be assisting with their equipment for removal of the heavier materials. The Housatonic Valley Association, United Way and UI are coordinating the work. They are now communicating with the property owners for permission to enter their property. Plans are to have volunteers perform the work with tentative dates of November 8th and November 15th. People walking the Riverwalk have commented about the amount of litter on that side of the river prompting the discussions to bring this project forward.

Motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by James Benanto. Move to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.